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THE CHILDREN'S NUTRITION COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN DISCUSSES THE FUTURE OF FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION IN POSTWAR RECONSTRUCTION

In a memorandum appearing in the September issue of "The Medical Officer," an English journal for medical men in the Government and municipal services, the Children's Nutrition Council reviews the Food Advice Program carried on by the Ministry of Food throughout the war and points out the need for a continuing program of food and nutrition education in postwar reconstruction.

The memorandum is interesting because it points up clearly both similarities and differences between the British and United States program.

In Great Britain the Ministry of Food exercised complete control over food production and distribution and directed the national education program on food use and preparation. It set up an experimental and practical kitchen to try out new ways of using the limited variety of available foods so they would seem less monotonous to consumers. It issued material for the press and radio and set up a regular news letter service to housewives. It established some 40 Food Advice Centers throughout the country in buildings located in shopping centers and staffed by qualified women using food demonstration and exhibits as teaching media.

"Food Leaders" Scheme—The Council considers the program carried on by "Food Leaders" to be the most important part of the whole education plan. "Leaders" were recruited from the membership of women's voluntary organizations operating through boroughs and counties. Their job was to convey food information, issued by the Ministry of Food, to their neighbors, in order to promote welfare food plans; arrange lectures, window displays, and to distribute information leaflets, etc. Potential Food Leaders were given orientation courses, on the completion of which they were given

badges of identification. In the United States, volunteers, including block and neighborhood leaders, working with State and local nutrition committees and with nutrition agencies, were a rough counterpart of these "Food Leaders" who in England were identified with the work of the borough and county organizations.

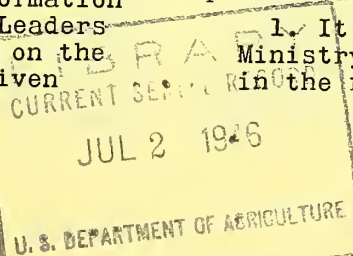
The essential difference between the two programs lay in the field of administrative direction and control.

The Ministry of Food financed and administered the entire program, whereas in this country national machinery was established by Executive order of the President to coordinate the activities of the several Federal agencies concerned with food and nutrition and to work with and through autonomous State nutrition committees which, in turn, organized local and county committees to carry necessary food and nutrition information to their communities.

In discussing a food and nutrition program in postwar reconstruction in England, the Council feels it essential to consolidate the educational gains made during wartime food controls and to project a peacetime program which will capture and hold public interest. It is well aware of the difficulties that lie ahead for such a program. First, it will have to demonstrate that the program is necessary and will pay high dividends in improved national health; second, citizens are allergic to "food education" when the foods they want are available, and when they have the money to buy them; third, volunteers with the necessary qualifications who were more than willing to serve during the war will be more difficult to recruit for a continuing program; and finally the question arises, by what central agency should it be administered and financed? Three possible solutions to the last problem are suggested:

1. It could continue under the Ministry of Food with funds provided in the regular budget.

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2. It could be established as a Food Advice Council, loosely associated with one of the ministries, drawing funds in part from the Ministry and in part from other sources, for example, local authorities.

3. It could attempt to finance itself from private donations and subscriptions.

The Council favors the second method unless the Ministry of Food is to become a permanent department of State.

"SHARE THE FOOD DAY"

In the September News Letter we told you about the general plans for "Share the Food Day" initiated by the Girl Scouts with the active participation of other youth groups. The program was launched on September 18 in New York City at a luncheon in the Town Hall Club. Mrs. Roosevelt presided and broadcast a short message to the Nation on the Farm-and-Home-Hour program. Representatives from UNRRA and the Interim Commission on Food and Agriculture spoke and a message from the Secretary of Agriculture was read.

The luncheon menu consisted of one small sardine, one scoop of unseasoned rice, a banana, and a glass of water—the New York City Food and Nutrition Committee worked closely with the Share the Food Committee and prepared an exhibit of the daily menus of some 10 or more European and Asiatic countries. Actual foods were used. Copies of these menus may be obtained from the Share the Food Committee, 155 East 44th Street, New York 17, N. Y.

Luncheons similar to this one were sponsored by youth groups and were held all over the country. So great was the interest aroused that extensive continuing programs are planned to keep before the public the need to share what we have in such plenty with war-ridden countries. Public response has been most encouraging. The following excerpts are from Mr. Anderson's message:

"All of us need to be reminded that the need for food abroad is very real, and that food is one of the keystones in the world peace structure which we are building. * * *

"Supplying American food to help relieve hunger abroad is a job that all of us must tackle together—Congress, the executive agencies of the Federal Government, UNRRA, the foreign countries involved, and the whole body

of common people in the United States and the United Nations.

"If we all work together and do our part, we can help relieve the suffering of thousands of our friends abroad, and by so doing we can make a great contribution to the building of lasting peace."

LIBRARIES PROMOTE NUTRITION EDUCATION

Libraries are important in keeping the public informed regarding any current information. People are in a reading mood when they visit libraries. State library commissions also have circulated a good many nutrition education materials through their county library and bookmobile plans.

The Public Library at Jacksonville, Fla., in cooperation with the Duval County-Jacksonville Nutrition Committee, maintained a nutrition corner. This corner was no inconspicuous place that could be used for no other purpose; it was one of the very best locations on the main floor of the library. At all times it was well stocked with good posters, books on nutrition for loan to patrons, and "take-home" publications, some Government and some commercial. During September 1944, the special nutrition bookmarks available from the Government were distributed by this library. They have also given out large numbers of the bookmarks made by the local nutrition committee.

The Public Library of Richmond, Va., has purchased nutrition films and has made them available for loan to schools and clubs. This library also maintained a "nutrition" shelf, displayed posters in prominent places, and placed free materials so that they would be noticed and read by patrons.

State library commissions have done a number of interesting things in nutrition education. West Virginia's State Commission has compiled and distributed usable lists of nutrition education material. North Carolina's State Librarian requested kits of available nutrition education material in sufficient amounts to make them available to county libraries and bookmobiles. Undoubtedly there are many other libraries which have been active in nutrition program work. If there are some instances on which we haven't had a story, please send it in to the Nutrition Programs Branch so that we can send them to committees wanting new ideas.

Wouldn't it be a good idea for nutrition committees to take fresh, clean copies of materials, bulletins, and posters to libraries now that schools and clubs are starting fall programs? After all, materials do get soiled and worn.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

ARKANSAS.—The School Lunch Committee of the Arkansas Consumer-Nutrition Committee made eight recommendations for 1945-46 to county consumer-nutrition committees of types of activities which would be helpful to the school lunch program. The appointment of a county school lunch committee as a subcommittee of the county consumer-nutrition committee was urged. Members of community groups such as Home Demonstration Clubs and Parent Teacher Associations, were encouraged to organize for the production of food for school lunch by planting an extra row in the garden, by growing an extra bushel or more food, by filling extra cans, or by helping with a community garden. School administrators and community school lunch committees were likewise encouraged to work out a plan for canning surplus food for school lunches at a community canning center, or by setting up available equipment in a convenient local center as a lunch-room.

School lunch committees were urged to give more attention to sanitation and safe milk supply, following the recommendations set up by the State Board of Health.

WEST VIRGINIA.—The State Nutrition Committee reports another successful season for canning clinics. In most of the counties they were planned by the county nutrition committee. "Canning Clinic" was the name used for information centers where consultation service on canning problems was provided. Experience from past years led to the decision to have a professional worker on duty at each clinic. The responsibility for managing the clinics was shared by the different agencies.

The centers were located in stores, banks, and utility company lobbies. Clinics in the latter location were especially well attended on discount days when large numbers of people were paying utility bills.

Exhibits were featured as part of the clinic and included canning equipment,

publications, display of well-canned food, and samples of spoilage in canned food.

Arrangements could be made at the clinics for having pressure-cooker gages tested.

IOWA.—In Iowa the State Nutrition Committee sponsored a series of school lunch workshops in August. The workshop lasted for 2 days and the program was based on some of the questions which those who had "run the school lunch programs" had been having. Demonstrations, discussions, and talks were the methods used in presenting the information.

ILLINOIS.—The education subcommittee of the State Nutrition Committee has arranged a supplement to "A Suggestive Guide for Teaching Nutrition in Illinois Elementary Schools," which was printed through the courtesy of the Illinois War Council and is being distributed through the State Department of Health. Last year's guide was very popular, as can be seen by the fact that almost 25,000 copies were distributed and requests are still being received. One county believes that teaching nutrition really pays because their "before-and-after" studies show an improvement of from 2 percent to 11 percent in the children who had the right food!

VERMONT.—A nutrition educational program following up the Bennington study and clinic demonstration will get under way this fall. Plans for this follow-up work were made by State and county workers at a called meeting at the close of the clinic demonstration program.

The Bennington study was an excellent example of community, county, State, and Federal cooperation. Local teachers and the county home demonstration agent obtained 3-day diet histories from almost 1,700 school children. A local physician assisted by school nurses gave over 1,000 physical examinations. The executive secretary and representatives of the State Nutrition Committee assisted in organizing and promoting the survey. United States Public Health officials tested over 500 blood samples for hemoglobin content and presented the nutrition clinic demonstration. On the local level, 14 agencies cooperated.

CHICAGO.—Because the Chicago Nutrition Committee believes that nutrition should be made a part of the general education program, they secured the cooperation of the Director of the Elementary School

Workshop at the University of Chicago this summer in trying out their idea. It was decided that a nutrition consultant should be placed on the staff of the Workshop. This consultant was loaned for the 6-week period by the Nutrition Service of the Chicago Chapter of the American Red Cross, which is a member of the Nutrition Committee.

The plans made in advance had to be adjusted because the abilities, interests, and wishes of the participants could not all be anticipated. There was little interest shown in nutrition in the first 2 weeks of the Workshop. Special effort, however, was made to show that food does play an important part in child development, in health, and in the progress of the children in school. This created the interest that had been hoped for, as was indicated by the problems discussed with the consultant. Participants asked how they as primary teachers could help the children select the right food if there was no planned meal in the cafeteria. They wanted to know how an agriculture teacher, as was represented in the group, could include human nutrition when there was a home economics department in the school. Or should they? They brought up the question of what nutrition materials should be made available to teachers through the library service. They wanted help on evaluating the programs they had already been carrying in the school when working with parent groups, and on school lunches and gardens. One superintendent in a rural elementary school wanted to know what he could suggest when the State Home Economics Association wanted him to tell them what they could do to assist in bringing nutrition into the elementary grades. They also discussed how parent groups could be reached with this information when there is no home economics teacher in the school. They even wanted to know about some of their own nutrition problems. It turned out to be a successful activity, as is indicated by the fact that the director of the Workshop has requested the nutrition consultant to be carried as a staff member again next year when several additional activities will be tried out.

"SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T EAT"

There has been a further delay in the production of 16-mm. prints of this picture. We are now informed that they

will be in the depositories and available for distribution on or about November 5, 1945.

NEW MATERIALS—(Samples Not Enclosed)

"Cooking with Dried Eggs." AIS-28.—This 16-page pamphlet, prepared by the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, gives the what, when, and how of dried eggs. It is attractively illustrated and contains recipes for using dried whole eggs, dried egg yolks, and dried egg whites. Copies may be obtained from the Office of Information, USDA, Washington 25, D. C.

"Nutritive Value of Canned Foods."—An 8-page pamphlet recently published by the Home Economics Division of the National Canners Association. In addition to a general statement on the nutritive value of canned foods, it tells how they should be prepared for the table and how to use them in planning family meals; it also contains a chart giving the vitamin content of 32 commercially canned products. The Basic 7 food chart and a short bibliography are also included. Copies are available free on request from the National Canners Association, 1739 H Street NW., Washington 6, D. C.

"To Enrich or Not to Enrich."—A pro and con symposium on the enrichment of flour by Drs. E. V. McCollum, Russell M. Wilder, Agnes Fay Morgan, and Helen S. Mitchell appearing in the September 1945 issue of the "Journal of Home Economics." Reprints are available from the American Home Economics Association, Mills Building, Washington 6, D. C., at 10 cents a copy.

Sincerely yours,

M L Wilson

M. L. Wilson, Chief
Nutrition Programs

W H Sebrell

W. H. Sebrell, Associate Chief
Nutrition Programs